

Olympic National Park Recreational Fishing Regulations Proposed Changes for 2009-2010

#1. Queets River Rules, Two Proposals.

Proposed change A: Change the number of management sections in the Queets River from three to two. The current rules divide the Queets River into *three* primary management sections in Olympic National Park that include: 1) Queets River, mainstem, below Hartzell boat launch; 2) Queets River, mainstem, from Hartzell boat launch upstream to Streaters Crossing boat launch; and 3) Queets River, mainstem, Streaters Crossing boat launch upstream.

The proposed change would designate two primary river sections: A) Queets River, mainstem, *below* Hartzell including the boat launch; and B) Queets River, mainstem, *above* Hartzell boat launch to headwaters.

Explanation: The elimination of one section break (e.g. Hartzell to Streaters) will better clarify fishing regulations in the Queets Rivers. The current regulations confuse anglers with three different section breaks, particularly in light of recent changes to the Queets River road. In May, 2008, the Queets River road in Olympic National Park was rerouted and now bypasses Streaters Crossing. Road access to Hartzell boat launch remains unchanged.

Proposed change B: The proposed change would implement selective gear rules (artificial lure with barbless single point hook) above Hartzell boat launch to headwaters throughout the angling season. The current rules contain selective gear rules (artificial lure with barbless single point hook) from Streaters Crossing boat launch to the headwaters, and allow bait, treble, and barbed hooks from Hartzell boat launch upstream to Streaters Crossing boat launch from November 15 to February 28.

Explanation: The use of bait is directed at runs of hatchery steelhead and hatchery salmon released from Salmon River Hatchery, located below Hartzell boat launch. Information from National Park Service creel surveys from 1994 to present revealed a high percentage of wild steelhead encountered between Hartzell and Streaters Crossing. Additionally, angler catches of hatchery steelhead are greatly reduced upstream of Hartzell boat launch. The use of selective gear upstream of Hartzell boat launch would better protect wild fish as well as protect federally threatened bull trout by making it easier for anglers to release fish. The regulation change would also provide consistent selective gear rules throughout the upper Queets River and improve overall consistency among several Olympic National Park rivers where selective gear rules already apply (e.g. Hoh, South Fork, Ozette, Calawah, Bogachiel, Dosewallips, Duckabush, Elwha, Gray Wolf, Sol Duc, North Fork Sol Duc, Coastal Creeks, and Quinault).

Regulations for use of bait, treble, and barbed hooks will remain unchanged from Hartzell boat launch downstream. The seasons and daily limits for steelhead would also remain unchanged when compared to 2008-2009 regulations.

#2. Pacific Coastal Area (Hoh, Dickey, Quillayute, Queets)

Proposed change: Eliminate the definition “jack salmon” in the Pacific Coastal Area and Salmon River (Queets). Maintain the adult salmon daily limits identical to the 2008-2009 Olympic

National Park fishing regulations, or consistent with any changes in the upcoming North of Falcon Process. Any salmon over the minimum size limit would be included as part of the daily limit.

Explanation:

The proposed change would eliminate a regulation that targets harvest of jack salmon, reducing the daily limit of jack salmon by *up to* four fish depending on the area. Jack salmon are sexually mature male fish that are younger than the youngest female in a spawning area. Jack salmon represent alternate life history patterns that provide genetic diversity, potentially enhancing adaptability in a population. The NPS recognizes the role and importance of wild jack salmon in the diversity of Pacific salmon life histories. The proposed change would clarify regulations in the Pacific Coastal Area and improve consistency with NPS management policies that focus on preserving or restoring the natural behavior, genetic variability and diversity of fish populations.

The following are examples of how the proposed change would simplify and clarify each regulation:

A) In the Dickey River during summer, the current regulations state, “Daily limit 6. No more than two adults may be retained. Release wild Chinook and wild coho salmon”.

The proposed change would read, “Daily limit two salmon. Release wild Chinook and wild coho salmon”.

B) In the Salmon River (Queets Basin), the current regulations in the fall state, “Up to 3 adult coho may be retained. Up to 6 total salmon including jacks: Release Chinook”.

The proposed change would read, “Daily limit 3 salmon. Release Chinook.”